

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7149
INFO ERDA WASHDC
ERDA GERMANTOWN
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA
USMISSION OECD PARIS

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DEPT. PASS NRC
DEPT. PASS ACDA

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, PARM, GW
SUBJECT: STATUS AND TRENDS IN GERMAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMS
AND POLICIES: REPROCESSING

REF: A. BONN 03333; B. BONN 11284 (1976)

1. SUMMARY. THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GERMAN
ATOMIC FORUM PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY
TO OBTAIN RELEVANT INFORMATION ON THE STATUS AND
OUTLOOK FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY IN THE FRG. TOPICS FOR
THE FOUR PLENARY SESSIONS WERE: THE NUCLEAR FUEL
CYCLE (WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON REPROCESSING),
ADVANCED REACTOR SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER,
THE FRG ENERGY PROGRAM AND FUTURE FINANCING OF
NUCLEAR ENERGY, AND THE GERMAN RISK STUDY
AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY. END
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SUMMARY.

2. THIS REPORT COVERS ONLY REPROCESSING. OTHER TOPICS
WILL BE COVERED IN SEPTELS.

3. DR. MANFRED HAGEN, DIRECTOR OF THE FUEL CYCLE
OFFICE IN THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR RESEARCH AND

TECHNOLOGY (BMFT) EXPLAINED IN HIS PAPER THE NECESSITY FOR REPROCESSING IN THE FRG. HAGEN EXPLAINED THAT A FULLY DEVELOPED NUCLEAR CYCLE WOULD SAVE UP TO 30 PERCENT OF LOW ENRICHED URANIUM AND ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF ENRICHMENT CAPACITY. HAGEN AMPLIFIED THIS ARGUMENT BY POINTING OUT THAT THE US WOULD -- EVEN WITH A DRASTICALLY REDUCED PROGRAM OF 300 GW OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS -- CONSUME WELL OVER 50 PERCENT OF THE WORLDWIDE AVAILABLE URANIUM RESOURCES, IF IT REFRAINED FROM REPROCESSING AND ABANDONED ITS FAST BREEDER PROGRAM. THIS ARGUMENT WAS LATER PICKED UP BY DR. STOLL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE GERMAN COMPANY ALKEM, WHICH FABRICATES MIXED OXIDE FUELS FOR LIGHT WATER REACTORS AND OTHER PLUTONIUM TECHNOLOGIES. STOLL STATED THAT A POSSIBLE US MORATORIUM ON REPROCESSING AND ON THE PLUTONIUM ECONOMY WOULD NOT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF NON-PROLIFERATION BECAUSE THE US WITH ITS HUGE DOMESTIC URANIUM REQUIREMENTS WOULD FORCE OTHER INDUSTRIAL NATIONS AND -- EVEN MORE -- THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INTO SPEEDING UP THEIR RE-PROCESSING AND FAST BREEDER PROGRAMS TO ASSURE A RELIABLE FUEL SUPPLY FOR THEIR GROWING ENERGY NEEDS.

4. HAGEN ALSO ARGUED THAT THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST PAR OF THE USNRC-GESMO REPORT PROVED THAT REPROCESSING WAS ALSO FAVORED FROM RADIO-ECOLOGICAL REASONS, BECAUSE THE STUDY FOUND THAT THE RE-UNCLASSIFIED

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CYCLING OF URANIUM WITH ITS ASSOCIATED CUT-BACK IN URANIUM MINING COULD REDUCE THE TOTAL POPULATION DOSE RELEASED BY THE OVERALL NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES. FURTHERMORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ALL REQUIRED TECHNOLOGIES HAD BEEN PROVEN SO THAT NO ECONOMIC OR TECHNICAL ARGUMENT COULD BE ADVANCED AGAINST THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GERMAN REPROCESSING PLANS.

5. HAGEN THEN TURNED TO THE ONLY IMPORTANT POLITICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST REPROCESSING: NON-PROLIFERATION. HE DENIED THAT ANY MEASURES TO EXCLUDE CERTAIN NATIONS FROM REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES WOULD SERVE TO PREVENT PROLIFERATION WHICH, IN FACT, HAD BEEN INITIATED YEARS AGO UNDER THE ATOMS FOR PEACE PROGRAM. THOUSANDS OF NUCLEAR EXPERTS HAD THE KNOWLEDGE, AND ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION TO BUILD A SMALL SCALE REPROCESSING PLANT WAS EASILY ACCESSIBLE IN THE TECHNICAL LITERATURE. HAGEN CONCLUDED THAT ONLY A WIDE-

RANGING POLITICAL EFFORT TO SUPPLEMENT THE INTER-

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NATIONAL SAFEGUARDS SYSTEM COULD POSSIBLY BE
COMPATIBLE WITH NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
DECISIONS IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY.

6. IN ANOTHER PAPER GUENTHER SCHEUTEN, MANAGING
DIRECTOR OF THE GERMAN COMPANY FOR REPROCESSING
(DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FUER DIE WIEDERAUFARBEITUNG
VON KERNBRENNSTOFFEN - DWK) GAVE A STATUS REPORT
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLANNED GERMAN
INTEGRATED NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE CENTER (REF A).
SCHEUTEN EMPHASIZED THAT IN CONTRAST TO BRITAIN
AND FRANCE THE GERMAN FACILITY WOULD BE PRIVATELY
OWNED AND OPERATED BY A CONSORTIUM OF TWELVE
ELECTRIC UTILITIES. ONLY THE FINAL DISPOSAL OF THE
NUCLEAR WASTE WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY.

7. SCHEUTEN EXPLAINED THAT AFTER THE GOVERNMENT
OF LOWER SAXONY HAD SELECTED THE SITE OF THE

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CENTER (REF B), DWK WOULD PRESENT A 3000 PAGE SAFETY REPORT FOR THE FIRST PARTIAL CONSTRUCTION LICENSE. THE INPUT STORAGE BASINS OF THIS CENTER ARE PLANNED TO BE COMPLETED BY 1985/86, THE WHOLE CENTER IS TO BEGIN OPERATION BY 1989 AND THE FINAL WASTE DEPOSITORY WILL BE FINISHED BY 1993. BECAUSE THE INPUT BASINS WILL BE COMPLETED TOO LATE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GERMAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM, DWK PLANS TO CONSTRUCT A 1500 TONNES INTERMEDIATE CENTRAL STORAGE BASIN (WHICH WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE LOCATED AT THE SITE OF THE CENTER) TO COVER THE EXPECTED SHORTAGE IN STORAGE CAPACITY. DWK HAS APPLIED FOR AN OPTION TO DOUBLE THAT CAPACITY, WHICH SHOULD BE AVAILABLE BY 1982. SCHEUTEN ALSO COMMENTED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF REPROCESSING GERMAN SPENT FUEL IN FRANCE OR BRITAIN. FIRST CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRENCH COGEMA AND BRITISH BNFL ABOUT CONTRACTS TO REPROCESS 200 TONNES OF SPENT FUEL ANNUALLY FOR THE PERIOD 1981-91 SHOWED THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD COST THE GERMAN PARTNERS ABOUT DM 4.5 BILLION WHICH WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. DWK IS NOW TRYING FOR A TWO YEAR CONTRACT (1981-83) TO HAVE A TOTAL OF 300 TONNES REPROCESSED. SCHEUTEN STATED THAT ANY SUCH NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION COULD ONLY BE OF INTERMEDIATE NATURE AND SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLANS FOR THE INTEGRATED NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE CENTER.

STOESSEL.

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